Australian Leaders and Legacy Media Celebrates Launch of Online Digital ID Age Verification Law

A crusade to shield kids online ends with an entire nation under surveillance.

By **Christina Maas** December 10, 2025 4 min read + Subscribe Share

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It was sold as a “historic day,” the kind politicians like to frame with national pride and moral purpose.

Cameras flashed in Canberra as Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stood at the podium, declaring victory in the fight to “protect children.”

What Australians actually got was a nationwide digital ID system. Starting December 10, every citizen logging into select online

platforms must now pass through digital ID verification, biometric scans, face matching, and document checks, all justified as a way to keep under-16s off social media.

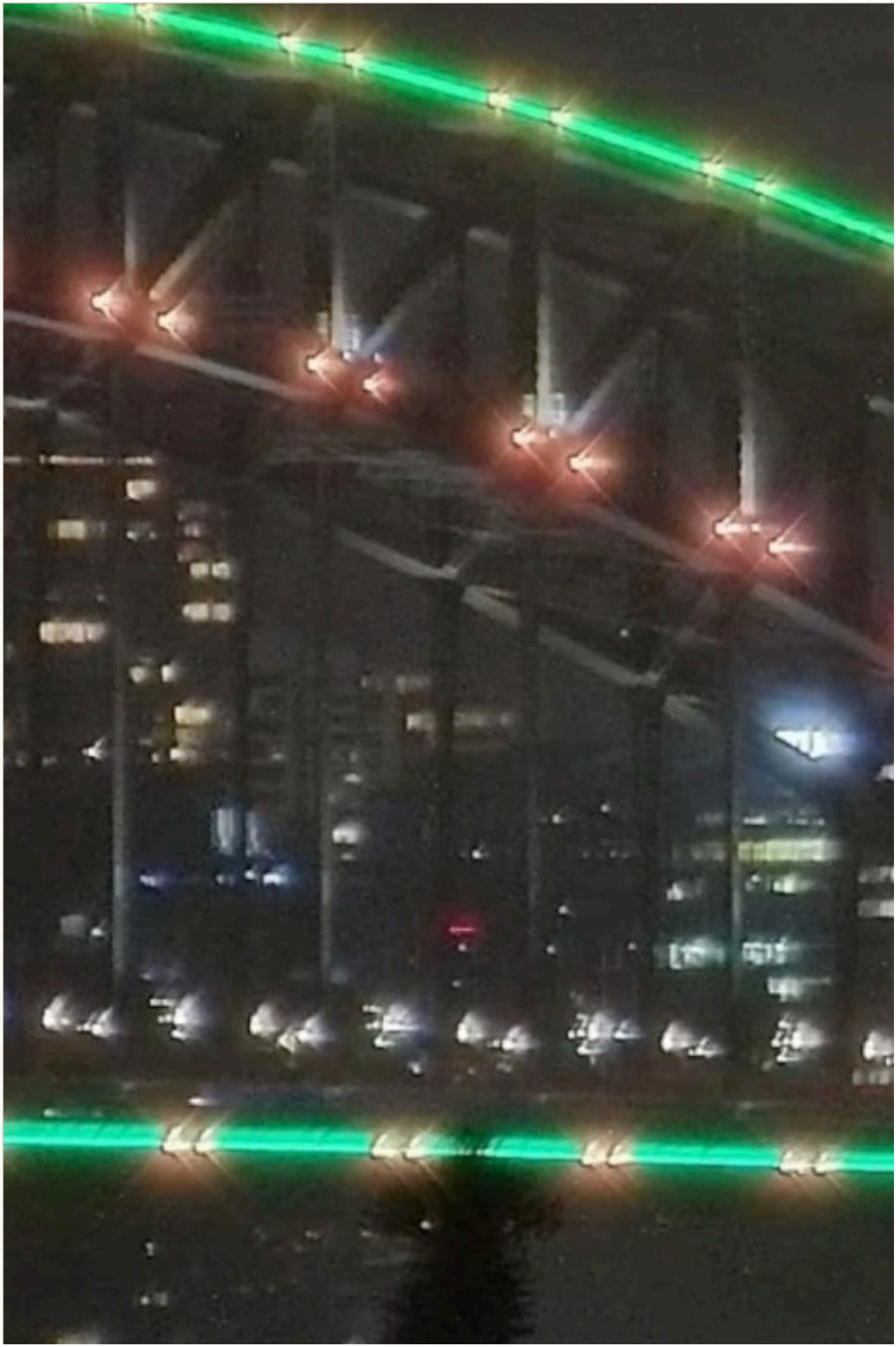
Kids are now banned from certain platforms, but it's the adults who must hand over their faces, IDs, and biometric data to prove they're not kids.

"Protecting children" has been converted into a universal surveillance upgrade for everyone.

According to Albanese, who once said if he became a dictator the first thing he would do was ban social media, the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 will "change lives."

He described it as a "profound reform" that will "reverberate around the world," giving parents "peace of mind" and inspiring "the global community" to copy Australia's example.

The Prime Minister's pride, he said, had "never been greater." Listening to him, you'd think he'd cured cancer rather than making face scans mandatory to log in to Facebook.



Sydney lit up the Harbour Bridge to celebrate Australia's new online digital ID age verification la

The press conference had the feel of an awards show where everyone on stage gets a trophy.

Communications Minister Anika Wells said, "December 10 will be remembered as a moment that sparked a movement."

South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas called it "a really special day." Mel Pilling, the Courier-Mail editor who helped push the News Corp "Let Them Be Kids" campaign that lobbied for the law, echoed the talking points about a "historic day" that would "change lives" and "save lives."

The repetition was almost hypnotic. Every official and media figure used the same words, the same emotional framing. Nobody mentioned that the "change" involves handing one's biometric data to a third-

party verification vendor so that a regulator can confirm you're not a 15-year-old trying to watch cat videos.

Then came Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner and top censor, defender of youth against the dark arts of free speech. Grant hailed the law as the world's first real cure for what she called "one of the great social experiments of our time."

She predicted other nations would follow Australia's lead, just as they once copied its policies on plain tobacco packaging and gun reform. "The world will follow," she said. "How can you not follow a country who is clearly prioritizing teen safety ahead of tech profits?"

Her office promised immediate enforcement. In a media release, eSafety vowed it "will not hesitate to take enforcement action" and threatened fines of up to $49.5 million for "systemic breaches."

Grant herself announced she would begin issuing "information notices" to ten major platforms the very next day.

Later, in an interview with 10 News, Grant revealed that behind the moral triumph, things weren't so glorious. She said pushing the law had "been shit" and that her office was "tired."

She complained that tech companies hadn't "really applied themselves" and hadn't done a "much better job" implementing her preferred verification systems.

She called it "frustrating" before urging parents to report any platforms that "have not de-platformed your child."

It's a strange sight: the official enforcing biometric compliance across an entire country also describes herself as exhausted and underappreciated.

Yet even in fatigue, she remained eager to deputize parents as informants in her digital age patrol.

Behind the speeches was a full public relations campaign. News Corp's outlets, whose biggest competitors are social media platforms, framed the rollout as a moral victory, emphasizing that "Australia leads the world."

The coverage celebrated the architects of the law while warning that tech companies better comply. The message to other governments was unmistakable: copy this model or be accused of neglecting children.

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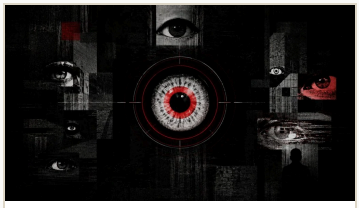

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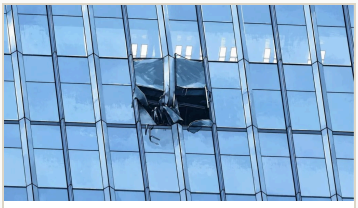

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